

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method, in a data processing system, for obtaining transportation services for traveling between a point of origin and a destination, comprising:
 - receiving a request for transportation services from a client device;
 - receiving, from the client device, an identifier of an acceptable travel window, wherein the travel window identifies a maximum amount of time that a passenger is willing to spend traveling from the point of origin to the destination; and
 - providing a guarantee of transportation services from a transportation provider based on the identified acceptable travel window, wherein providing the guarantee of transportation services does not reserve a seat on any particular vehicle.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - in response to a subsequent request from a client device, identifying one or more scheduled transportation services satisfying the travel window.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - identifying one or more scheduled transportation services satisfying the travel window; and
 - providing, at a time remote from the time that the guarantee of transportation services is provided, one or more itineraries, that include one or more of the one or more scheduled transportation services, to the client device.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the one or more itineraries include an itinerary of scheduled transportation services automatically selected for a user of the client device.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the one or more itineraries include at least one of corresponding prices and corresponding discounts.
6. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
receiving a selection of a preferred itinerary of the one or more itineraries from the client device.
7. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
receiving a notification time from the client device indicating a time prior to a departure time at which notification of the one or more itineraries is to be made available to the client device.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein providing one or more itineraries to the client device includes sending an electronic notification to the client device at approximately the notification time.
9. The method of claim 3, wherein the one or more itineraries include itineraries that include one or more scheduled transportation services that meet the time window and itineraries that include one or more scheduled transportation services that are within a tolerance of the time window.
10. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
in response to a selection of an itinerary from the one or more itineraries, wherein the selection is performed either automatically or by a user of the client device, booking a travel lane for the user of the client device corresponding to the selected itinerary, wherein the booking of the travel lane is performed at a remote time from when the guarantee of transportation services is provided.

11. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for obtaining transportation services for traveling between a point of origin and a destination, comprising:

first instructions for receiving a request for transportation services from a client device;

second instructions for receiving, from the client device, an identifier of an acceptable travel window, wherein the travel window identifies a maximum amount of time that a passenger is willing to spend traveling from the point of origin to the destination; and

third instructions for providing a guarantee of transportation services from a transportation provider based on the identified acceptable travel window, wherein providing the guarantee of transportation services does not reserve a seat on any particular vehicle.

12. The computer program product of claim 11, further comprising:

fourth instructions for identifying one or more scheduled transportation services satisfying the travel window; and

fifth instructions for providing, at a time remote from the time that the guarantee of transportation services is provided, one or more itineraries, that include one or more of the one or more scheduled transportation services, to the client device.

13. The computer program product of claim 12, wherein the one or more itineraries include an itinerary of scheduled transportation services automatically selected for a user of the client device.

14. The computer program product of claim 12, wherein the one or more itineraries include at least one of corresponding prices and corresponding discounts.

15. The computer program product of claim 12, further comprising:
sixth instructions for receiving a selection of a preferred itinerary of the one or more itineraries from the client device.
16. The computer program product of claim 12, further comprising:
sixth instructions for receiving a notification time from the client device indicating a time prior to a departure time at which notification of the one or more itineraries is to be made available to the client device.
17. The computer program product of claim 16, wherein the fifth instructions for providing one or more itineraries to the client device include instructions for sending an electronic notification to the client device at approximately the notification time.
18. The computer program product of claim 12, wherein the one or more itineraries include itineraries that include one or more scheduled transportation services that meet the time window and itineraries that include one or more scheduled transportation services that are within a tolerance of the time window.
19. The computer program product of claim 12, further comprising:
sixth instructions for booking a travel lane for a user of the client device corresponding to a selected itinerary in response to a selection of an itinerary from the one or more itineraries, wherein the selection is performed either automatically or by a user of the client device, and wherein the booking of the travel lane is performed at a remote time from when the guarantee of transportation services is provided.
20. A system for obtaining transportation services for traveling between a point of origin and a destination, comprising:
means for receiving a request for transportation services from a client device;

means for receiving, from the client device, an identifier of an acceptable travel window, wherein the travel window identifies a maximum amount of time that a passenger is willing to spend traveling from the point of origin to the destination; and

means for providing a guarantee of transportation services from a transportation provider based on the identified acceptable travel window, wherein providing the guarantee of transportation services does not reserve a seat on any particular vehicle.